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Midwest Natural Resources Group

November 1999 Meeting Summary Report

Bureau of Indian Affairs; Bureau of Land Management; Department of Energy; Federal Highway Administration; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Park Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Office of Surface Mining; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Geological Survey



*November 3 - 5, 1999
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*

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Introduction

The Midwest Natural Resources Group is leading a comprehensive, ongoing partnership effort to bring focus and excellence to federal activities in support of the vitality and sustainability related to the health of natural resources and the environment. It is the overarching goal of the Group to develop processes, marshal resources among agencies and partners, seek opportunities for collaboration and communication, and provide timely assistance where it is needed. Working together, the agencies represented by this Group, are committed to bringing results to the American public in the communities, towns, and farms of the Midwest.

In 1998, the Group agreed on the need for federal agencies to attain proactive coordination, eliminate duplication, and clearly establish the proper role for each federal bureau or agency within 12 geographic areas which the Group identified as critical priority areas of the Midwest. These focus areas can be divided into the Big Rivers basin and the Great Lakes basin.

The 12 focus areas and lead agencies are:

Big Rivers Basin Focus Areas and Lead Agencies:

Illinois River, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Minnesota River, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Missouri River, *National Park Service*

Ohio River, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

Ozark Plateau, *Bureau of Land Management*

Upper Mississippi Watershed, *Natural Resources Conservation Service*
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Great Lakes Basin Focus Areas and Lead Agencies:

Detroit River/St. Clair River, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Fox River/Green Bay, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Great Lakes, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Saginaw River and Bay, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Southern Lake Erie, *U.S. Geological Survey*

Southern Lake Michigan Crescent, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Working shoulder to shoulder for the benefit of the American people of the Midwest, the Group has agreed to analyze federal and partnership activities in the focus areas in terms of:

- Coordination, identification and enhancement of the accomplishments of existing efforts being under taken by federal and non-federal partners;
- Exploration of, and commitment toward, new opportunities for cooperation and collaboration; and
- Better reporting to Congress and the public regarding Federal progress and results within the Government Performance and Results Act as required by Congress.

The Group is committed toward applying the findings and developing the plans, outlined in this report, into solid, goal-based action that achieves the health of natural resources and the environment for the benefit of all. The Group and its agencies are wholly dedicated to this effort.

The Midwest Natural Resources Group is comprised of senior executives and regional directors of the following agencies:

Bureau of Indian Affairs	Office of Surface Mining
Bureau of Land Management	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Department of Energy	U.S. Coast Guard
Federal Highway Administration	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service	U.S. Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service	U.S. Geological Survey

Senior Leaders of the Group meet three times a year, in February, May and November, to discuss focus area progress, allocate resources, set priorities and address any new issues. Each year in November, two days prior to the Senior Leaders Meeting, the entire Group (all focus area teams, and the communications and operations sub-committees) assembles for a meeting.

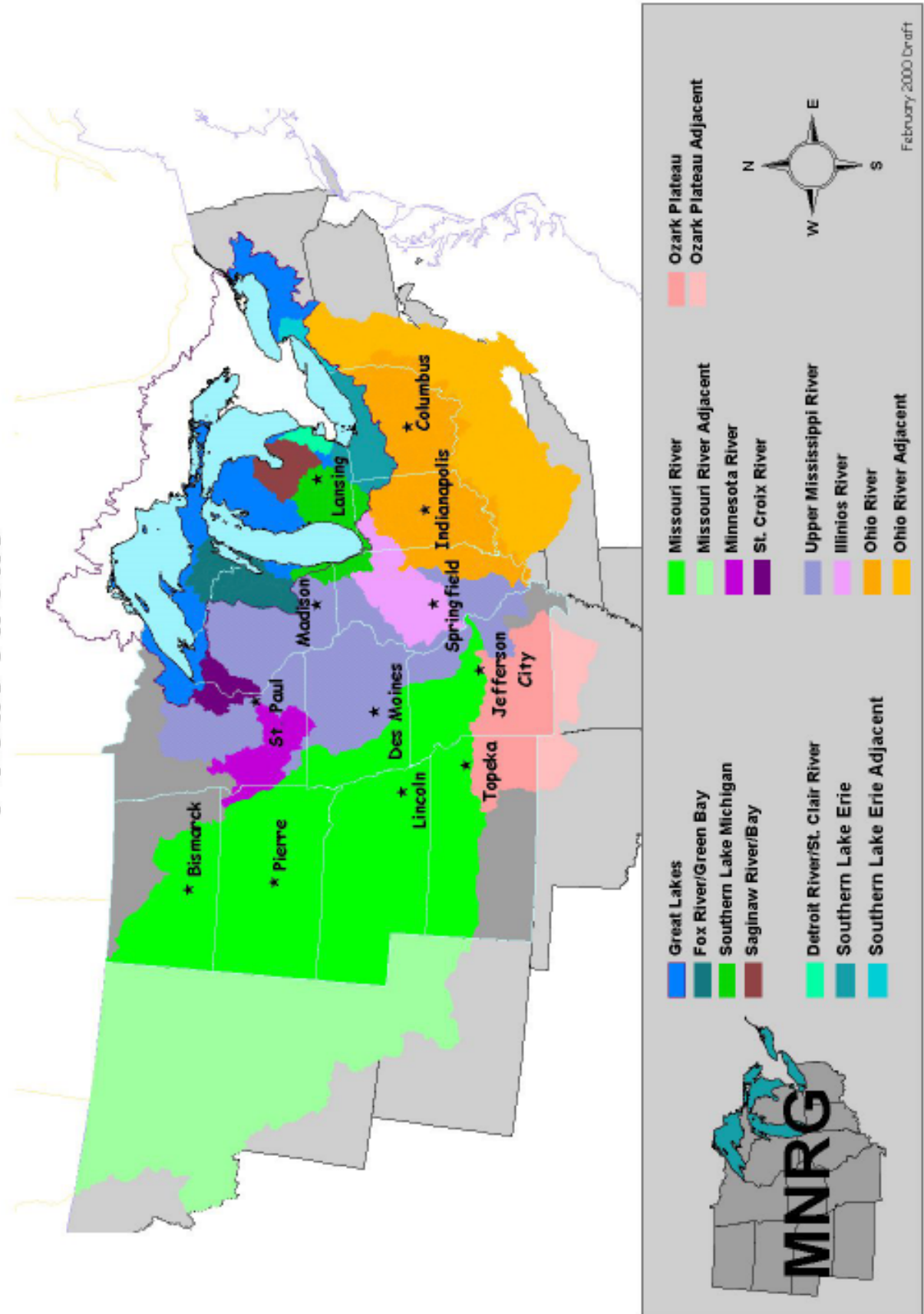
The entire Group meeting provides members the opportunity to discuss accomplishments and share information between and among all focus areas. The meeting closes with each focus area presenting a report of accomplishments, actions and issues to the Senior Leaders.

This report provides a summary of the accomplishments, actions and recommendations reported by each focus area. It also provides a summary of the Communications Sub-Committee meeting and Senior Leader responses to focus area action items. The appendix includes all materials submitted by each focus area.

This report is designed as a companion piece to the ***November 1999 Focus Area Executive Summaries*** publication which provides greater detail on each focus area and includes specific discussions of: (1) reason for being a priority focus area, including background and description of the area; (2) natural resource and environmental benefits, including economic benefits; (3) challenges to environmental health and well-being; (4) actions needing to be accomplished toward environmental health and natural resource goals; (5) federal role toward meeting environmental and natural resource goals; (6) partners, stakeholders and their role(s) in these efforts; and, (7) focus area team accomplishments.

Focus Area Map (Draft)

Midwest Natural Resources Group Focus Areas



Midwest Natural Resources Group

*Focus Area Meetings
Executive Summaries*



*November 3 - 5, 1999
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*

Agenda

Focus Area Meetings

Date/Time	Subject
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November 3, 1999

Noon - 1:00	Registration
1:00 - 2:30	Welcome by Bill Hartwig (MNRG Chair) Focus Area Meeting Organization
2:30 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 6:00	Focus Areas Break-Out Groups
7:00 - 9:00	Group Dinner for all Attendees

November 4, 1999

8:00 a.m. - 10:15	Focus Areas Break-Out Groups
10:15 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - Noon	Focus Areas Break-Out Groups
Noon - 1:00	Group Lunch for all Attendees (Senior Leaders arrive for afternoon session)
1:00 - 2:45	Focus Area Reports to Entire MNRG (15 min./Focus Area = 7 Areas)
2:45 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 4:30	Focus Area Reports to Entire MNRG (15 min./Focus Area = 6 Areas)
4:30 - 5:00	General Session Closing Remarks (meeting ends for Focus Area Participants)

Formal Charge

Focus Area Groups

- Elicit active stakeholder involvement by being aware of the ongoing activities of the local and state leadership and folding the efforts of the Federal agencies into that framework.
- Extend focus area meetings to include tribes, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.
- Either schedule a stakeholder meeting within the next year to explain the Federal agency collaboration effort or discuss the effort at an existing forum(s).
- Develop a common understanding of environmental threats, problems, and issues related to the focus area.
- Work within the framework of each agency's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) plan to address the common natural resource and environmental threats, problems, and issues related to each of the focus areas.
- Identify the specific actions needed to implement projects within the focus areas.
- Determine data collection and management needs for the focus areas.
- Develop a common message that addresses what it is that the focus area group and focus area stakeholders are trying to accomplish.
- Develop mechanisms to report accomplishments.

Topics

Focus Area “Break-Out” Meetings

- Self-analysis of your focus area - where are you with regard to working with other Federal agencies, tribes, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations
- Self analysis of your focus area - where are you with regard to identification of **on-the-ground** priorities and accomplishments (site specific accomplishable actions)
- Review focus area executive summaries and natural resource goals - update if necessary
- Have a “round robin” type of session to discuss areas of importance from each agency’s perspective
- Have you had any success, are you about to have success, and how are you going to report it
- Have you identified a meeting schedule for future focus area meetings - will the meetings be tied to other meetings
- Have you extended membership to include tribes, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to join your focus area
- Present a 15 minute report to the Midwest Natural Resources Group starting at 1:00 p.m. on September 4, 1999
- The report should include: (1) action items that you would like the Senior Leaders to address - what can they do to help the focus area accomplish its goals; (2) an update on the status and accomplishments of the group; and (3) specific project(s) you will be focusing on

Big Rivers Basin Focus Areas

Illinois River

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Minnesota River

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Missouri River

National Park Service

Ohio River

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Ozark Plateau

Bureau of Land Management

Upper Mississippi Watershed

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Illinois River

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Action Items

- Involve three District Conservationists in watershed
- Retrospective analysis of existing data and studies
- Identify watershed, sedimentation, geomorphic and hydraulic processes that are inadequately understood
- Formulate study plan that will address issues above and determine remediation measures
- Energize local partners and stakeholders
- Conduct study
- Design remedial measures
- Assimilate federal, state and local programs that can be used for “on-the-ground” activities
- Implement remedial measures
- Monitor, on a long term basis, after remediation
- Once project is established, move on to other issues and problems

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Crow Creek Watershed
 - Weis Lake
 - Goose Lake

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Increase and energize support at the Regional/Headquarters level
- Review/Edit/Sign the Interagency Partnership Agreement
- Allocate funding for the study
- Allocate funding for technical assistance
- Allocate funding for implementation
- Increase flexibility of programs
 - Allow federal funds to match federal funds for programs
- Commit to funding for long term monitoring

Minnesota River

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Clean Water Action Plan funds used by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for stream bank stabilization and wetland restoration
- Natural Resources Conservation Service established four Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) priority areas
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team has committed to provide assistance in the Minnesota River Focus Area
- Focus Area partners include: U.S. Geological Survey, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Joint Powers Board, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Shakopee Sioux Tribe

Action Items

- Complement existing partnerships
- Identify and protect remnant tallgrass prairie tracts
- Restore wetlands in the upper reaches of sub-watersheds
- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must accelerate the Wetlands Reserve Program

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- **Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge**
 - Acquisition of lands
 - Lead Agencies: Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- **Lower Sioux Reservation**
 - 1,750 acres of trust land
 - Identify, restore and manage wetlands
 - Lead Agencies: Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- **Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area**
 - Land cover inventory and classification
 - Lead Agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Provide top-down support and encouragement to ensure agency representatives can be available and active Focus Area Team Members

Missouri River

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- The Missouri River Focus Area held its second team meeting on October 19-20, 1999 at the National Park Service's Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska. Thirteen people representing eight federal agencies attended the meeting.

Action Items

- The functional boundaries of the Missouri River Focus Area should be established to most efficiently and effectively facilitate the federal agencies' ability to promote long-term protection and enhancement for the Missouri River basin's natural resources.
- The team concluded that there are several possible ways agencies could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness within the Missouri River Focus Area. This could especially be achieved through (1) renewed agency commitment to existing agreements and cooperative ventures, and (2) by seeking out existing and establishing new interagency cooperative projects or activities based on mutual legislative mandates, interests and needs.
- The team feels that the Missouri River Focus Area appears to be working in parallel to the "Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable," and perhaps should be part of that organization.

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- **"Livable Land"** (Missouri River Interagency Land Acquisition/Conservation Easement Strategy): The Focus Area team proposes to host a meeting of all agencies and groups that are either purchasing land or attempting to place land in conservation easements along the Missouri River.
- **"Healthy Waters"** (Aquatic Habitat Protection and Enhancement Program): The Focus Area team proposes to facilitate the synthesis and interpretation of water quality data throughout the entire Missouri River watershed in order to provide an overview picture of the quality of this ecosystem's aquatic habitat.

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Support for the (MoREAP)
 - The Senior Managers should support the MoREAP (Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program) as authorized in Senate Bill 1279, introduced by Senator Bob Kerry (Nebraska).
- Support the Missouri River Endangered Species Recovery Committee Process
Future Role for the Missouri River Focus Area
 - The Senior Managers should discuss the future role of the Missouri River Focus Area and its possible integration into and/or interaction with the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable.

Ohio River

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Found commonality within all agencies and opened lines of communication
- Face-to-face coordination has eased adversarial posturing and help with several projects
 - Ohio River Mainstem Navigation Study
 - Openly exploring ways to solve problems with pool fluctuations
 - Increase opportunity for partnership on upcoming Lewis and Clark celebration

Action Items

- Need to better define geographic area
- Need to further identify and define stakeholders
- Work with Office of Surface Mining programs which may allow federal funds to match federal funds to complete coal mine restoration projects
- A focus area meeting with federal, state and industrial partners will be set within the next year to discuss ways to reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources from Ohio River navigation operations

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Monday Creek watershed in Ohio
 - Initially funding was available but it fell through due to local partners inability to cost-share
 - Continue working to secure funding for project

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Need to encourage agencies to allocate needed resources and personnel for meetings and projects
- Evaluate the focus area member states
 - Ohio River watershed extends well beyond the Midwest
 - Should non-Midwest states be included?
- Develop ways to assist local governments with cost-sharing shortages

Ozark Plateau

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Action Items

- Better agency involvement
 - Contact other federal agencies that are not present
- Meet with:
 - Missouri State Water Quality Coordination Committee in the Ozarks (Jan. - Feb. 2000)
 - U.S. Geological Survey Cooperators Conference (April 2000)
- Share information about the Midwest Natural Resources Group within our agencies

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Water quality in White River basin
- Focus on James River
- High priority in Missouri and Arkansas
- Current federal agency activity is high
- Many opportunities for partnerships
- Strong grassroots support in the area
 - James River Partnership
 - Watershed Committee of the Ozarks

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- There needs to be a renewed commitment to the Midwest Natural Resources Group by the Senior leaders
- Senior leaders need to address the degree of political boundaries (i.e. regional and state) within the focus areas
- Develop a continuity plan so there is a reduction in overlap between agencies, states and regions
- Must develop better ways to help agencies communicate, partner, and share activities and ideas
- Ozark Plateau boundary must be revised (i.e. National Water Quality Assessment map)

Upper Mississippi Watershed

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- The U.S. Geological Survey Geographic Information System (GIS) project produced an information system for sharing and linking resource data and progress among agencies and other partners
- Establishment of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Initiative to support additional resources for conservation in the Upper Mississippi River Basin through legislative and other processes
- Began the process of selecting watersheds for additional partnership participation
- Initiated discussions of a working landscape initiative involving federal and private sector interests to foster environmental and economic benefits in land use

Action Items

- Work better together
- Better use of resources (i.e. pooling resources and talent)
- Sustain and enhance a viable, healthy ecosystem

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Support the U.S. Geological Survey website information system as a means for sharing data and information for the Midwest. Encourage agency buy-in to build a pilot for a geographic area
- Support agency participation in a pilot watershed program to enhance existing local watershed activities and ensure that natural resource management progress is being measured and related goals are being met (i.e. sediment and nutrient management and ecosystem restoration)
- Support enhanced agency participation in supplying talent, funding and other resources in ecosystem management activities in the Upper Mississippi River basin and the Midwest
- Continue to support the American Heritage Rivers Program
- Support development of a monitoring approach for conservation and ecosystem management activities to accommodate short term and long term outcome measurement
- Support the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Initiative to bring more focus and resources to bear on local efforts to manage sediment and nutrients. This initiative includes the development of conservation legislation to support local and partnership efforts
- Support a communication program to assist in telling the appropriate story of partnership effort outcomes
- Support flexibility in the use of federal funds in natural resource management such as coordinating federal acquisition plans
- Expand the federal membership of the Senior Leaders Group to include Federal Emergency Management Agency, Farm Services Agency and Federal Railroad Administration
- Support the formation of a Midwest Geographic Information System (GIS) Work Group to support partnership activities. A pilot activity could be coordinated with the U.S. Geological Survey Information Management and Decision Support System (see first recommendation)

Great Lakes Basin Focus Areas

Detroit River/St. Clair River

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Fox River/Green Bay

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Great Lakes

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Saginaw River and Bay

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Southern Lake Erie

U.S. Geological Survey

Southern Lake Michigan Crescent

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Detroit River/St. Clair River

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Black Lagoon - Trenton Channel
 - Contaminated sediment remediation; Habitat restoration
 - Alternative treatment technology to reuse contaminated sediments
- Detroit River Habitat Inventory and Restoration Project
 - Filling information gaps of historic habitat data; Provide guidance on place-based habitat restoration; Provide information for spill strategies
- Mud Island
 - Island transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a National Steel Corporation settlement
 - Will be included in Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge; Will allow habitat restoration
 - Will allow public access

Action Items

- Internal Outreach and Communication
 - Need to have ongoing communication on emerging issues among federal agencies
- External Outreach and Communication
 - Goal: Collective release of information
 - Need Detroit River/St. Clair River communication and outreach strategy to highlight collective accomplishments
 - Must target correct audience
 - Examples: Bulletin Board, Home Page, Listserver, Electronic News, Press Releases, Fact Sheets, Media Outlets
- Detroit River/St. Clair Focus Group
 - Volunteers to be a pilot project for the Midwest Natural Resource Group Communications Sub-Committee Communication Plan
 - Develop Strategy and Implement

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Belle Isle Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) Project
 - Improved, more efficient, alternative transportation
 - Habitat restoration
 - Shoreline erosion
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Alternative storm water management
 - Native landscape restoration

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Need dedicated staff and funding from all agencies
- Develop ongoing forum for communications and outreach for partners and stakeholders
- Do not reinvent the wheel

Fox River/Green Bay

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Contaminated Sediment Cleanup
 - Intergovernmental actions
 - Superfund
 - Natural Resource Damage Assessment
- Watershed/Ecosystem Management and Restoration
 - Remedial Action Plan implementation
 - Lower Fox River Partnership Group
 - Cat Island Chain restoration

Action Items

- Complete sediment cleanup and natural resource restoration plans for Lower Fox River/Green Bay
- Continue outreach efforts that provide the most accurate, up-to-date, information in order to communicate the commitment of federal agencies in the focus area
- Coordinate on final feasibility study and detailed design of Cat Island chain project with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Brown County
- Investigate potential complimentary greenway and trail projects in the focus area
- Promote Natural Resources Conservation Service Buffer Initiative in the focus area
- Continue emphasis on wetland and habitat restoration projects in the focus area

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Need to increase active participation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Fox River/Green Bay focus area
 - Various U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff members are active in several projects, but not in the Midwest Natural Resources Group coordination effort

Great Lakes

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Draft Great Lakes Ecosystem Report
- Great Lakes Planning Session, including identifying agency priorities for Great Lakes
- New Great Lakes Strategy
- Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP) Acceleration
- Ballast Water Management
- Binational Toxics Strategy
- Low Water Level Congressional Briefing

Action Items

- State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC) Indicators
 - Use Midwest Natural Resources Group Communications Plan to promote key indicators, e.g. Lake Trout, Bald Eagle, and Beach Closings
- Agency Review of Ecosystem Report
 - Use Midwest Natural Resources Group Communications Plan to promote success stories

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Coastal Wetlands Monitoring Project
- Integrate spatial and modeling capabilities
 - Such as collaboration on NASA regional earth science application center (remote sensing and modeling)
- Great Lakes Information Network

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Support Communication Team Coordinator Position
- Lead new major inter-agency Great Lakes Budget Initiative
- Provide support for Great Lakes Indicators through State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC)
 - Ensure transfer to end user, including common GIS database
- Support agency review of ecosystem report
- Support Great Lakes' Week in Washington, D.C., March 2000

Saginaw River and Bay

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Held focus area meeting in November 1999 at Lansing, Michigan
- Have garnered strong local interest

Action Items

- Coordinate next focus area meeting for late January, following Detroit River meeting

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Great Lakes Visitor and Education Center
 - Place for all agencies to showcase missions and accomplishments
 - Located on Interstate 75, near Bridgeport, Michigan
 - High public visibility
 - Federal land acquisition
 - Private fund raising for construction
 - Excellent inter-agency collaborative potential
 - Partners include federal, state, local government and nongovernmental organizations
- Natural Resources Damage Assessment in Saginaw River
 - PCB contaminated sediment cleanup
 - Monitoring and habitat restoration
 - Land acquisition
 - Partners include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (lead), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service (complimentary to Greenway Initiative and Rails to Trails), Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and various tribes
- Comprehensive Ecosystem Study of Saginaw Bay
 - Track fish, habitat recovery and determine the impacts of exotic species
 - Aquatic wetland restoration
 - Partners include: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and various Universities

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Supervisors need to specifically allocate resources and field personnel to attend meetings
- Reconfirm that the Midwest Natural Resources Group is a priority for all involved agencies
- Develop a means of communication and outreach, both within the Group and among the public

Southern Lake Erie

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Toledo Harbor Sediment Reduction Project
 - Partners include U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Farm Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey and Ohio State University Extension Services
- Lake Erie Buffer Program
 - Partners include Farm Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey and Sea Grant
 - Develop draft strategic plan and buffer brochure
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 - Ten year program including counties in western and central Lake Erie basin
 - \$4 million state funding and \$32 million federal funding
- Lake Erie wetland acquisition program (30 acres)
- Cooley canal jetty project completed
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
 - Over 35 wetland sites restored on private lands
 - Over 400 acres of wetland restoration on private lands
- Metzger's Marsh restoration and coordination
- Seven beneficial use impairment assessments completed

Action Items

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Lake Erie Buffer Team
- Toledo Harbor Sediment Reduction Project
- Continue wetland acquisition program by adding 400 - 600 additional acres
- Join Natural Resources Conservation Service Buffer Team (protection of streams)
- Continue to work with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP) priority habitat sites
- Begin two new reports:
 - *Lake Erie Contamination Hotspots*
 - *Status and Trends in Nitrogen and Phosphorus Loadings*
- Start Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) program in Cuyahoga National Recreation Area
- Coordinate with River Navigator on Cuyahoga CWAP Project
- Habitat Action Plan (Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Complete five additional beneficial use assessments
- Improve communications
 - Email
 - Conference calls
- Web page postings
 - Post quarterly
 - Midwest Natural Resource Group personnel
 - Focus area summary

Southern Lake Michigan

Focus Area Meeting Executive Summary

Accomplishments

- Developed clear geographic definition of focus area
- Agreed to focus on three specific areas
- Development and sharing of monitoring information
- Worked to avoid duplication of effort
- Enhance resources and sharing of data

Action Items

- Develop good GIS habitat data
- Coordination with Lake Michigan Monitoring Council
- Support Chicago Wilderness Project
- Utilize and support habitat atlas information
- Continue Focus Area communications through established email
- Solicit sponsorship and develop a Lake Michigan Use Meeting to focus on:
 - *Public health issues related to natural resources*
 - *Mining and erosion of dunes*

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- For 1998-1999:
 - Form the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordinating Council. We did, have had two meetings and have a web site at: wi.water.usgs.gov/lmmcc/index.html
 - Develop a Lake Michigan On-line Atlas that features habitat and uses GIS. We did and the first part is on line at: www.epa.gov/lakemich
 - Hold a stakeholders meeting. We held the "State of Lake Michigan '99" conference on November 8-9 in Muskegon, Mich., with an attendance of over 200
- For 1999-2000:
 - Continue to develop the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordinating Council and make it operational with the development of a Lake Michigan Monitoring Plan
 - Continue to develop the Lake Michigan On-line Atlas, with the addition of the Chicago Wilderness models and tools
 - Hold a Beach Conference to address E. Coli and erosion issues

Midwest Natural Resources Group

Communications Sub-Committee Meeting Executive Summary



*November 3-5, 1999
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*

Agenda

Communications Sub-Committee Meeting

Date/Time

Subject

November 3

Noon - 6:00

Attend Full Meeting and
Focus Area Group Meetings

7:00 - 9:00

MNRG Dinner (All Groups)

November 4

8:00 a.m. - Noon

Attend Various Focus Area Group Meetings

Noon - 1:00

MNRG Lunch (All Groups)
MNRG Senior Leaders Arrive

1:00 - 4:30

Focus Area Group Reports to Entire MNRG

4:30 - 5:00

Closing Remarks
End of MNRG General Session

7:00 - 8:30

Communications Sub-Committee Dinner
Accomplishment Reporting System Update

November 5

8:00 a.m. - 8:45

Attend MNRG Senior Leaders Meeting
Discussion on Communications Plan

8:45 - Noon

Communications Sub-Committee Meeting Topics:
Decisions of Senior Leaders Meeting
Who Will Do What/Set Deadlines
Stepping Down the Communications Plan
Use of the Executive Summaries in the
Communications Plan/Outreach
Revision of Communication Plan (if needed)
Hammer Award
Observations from the Focus Area Meetings
and Other Topics from November 3-4
Set Next Meeting/Conference Call

Noon - 1:00

Lunch on Your Own

1:00 - 2:45

Continue Morning Discussions

2:45

Adjourn

Meeting Notes

Communications Sub-Committee Meeting

Many Communications Sub-Committee members attended the Senior Leaders meeting where Susan Dreiband (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) presented the budget for The Communications Plan's highest priorities. This was followed by a funding discussion and some recommendations and actions items:

- Each agency was asked to commit at least \$3,000 toward the Communications Plan budget. Some are committing \$3,000, a couple of agencies will commit more, one or two may be a little less than that, and others will commit in-kind services.
- Susan Dreiband was asked to figure out how the budget would be administered; to try to assemble the exact agency commitments and report back to Senior Leaders by January.
- The Midwest Natural Resources Group logo design will be handled by Marion Fisher (U.S. Geological Survey). Communications Sub-Committee members and Senior Leaders will be presented with samples of various logo designs to choose from.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has committed to develop and maintain the Midwest Natural Resource Group website and photo library.
- Todd Goeks (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) has committed to update and develop a new focus area map. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey will also assist with coordination.
- It was also decided to develop an accomplishment reporting system site for the Midwest Natural Resources Group. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will lead this action.

After meeting with the Senior leaders, the Communications Sub-Committee members met together as a team. The following is a summary of the meeting:

- The Committee discussed stepping down the Communications Plan and Susan Dreiband offered to send each Focus Area Team Leader a request asking if they are ready for a stepped down plan. The Detroit River team has already asked for a plan.
- Points of contact from the Committee were suggested for each focus area and the draft recommendations are as follows:
 - Illinois River - Susan Dreiband/Marion Fisher
 - Minnesota River - Susan Dreiband
 - Missouri River - Flo Six (National Park Service)/Heidi Koehler (U.S. Geological Survey)
 - Ohio River - Suzanne Fournier (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
 - Ozark Plateau - Heidi Koehler
 - St. Croix - Flo Six
 - Upper Mississippi River - Pam Carter (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
 - Detroit River/St. Clair River - Karen Thompson (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
 - Fox River/Green Bay - Karen Thompson
 - Great Lakes - Karen Thompson/Susan Fournier
 - Saginaw River and Bay - Susan Dreiband
 - Southern Lake Erie - Suzanne Fournier
 - Southern Lake Michigan - Marion Fisher

- Chuck Traxler (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Karen Thompson have agreed to develop fact sheets (one for each Focus Area and a General Fact sheet).
- Heidi Koehler offered to find out about using Gebbie Press for MNRG news dissemination.
- It was recommended that we divide media lists by Focus Area.
- The Committee will work with each Focus Area team to collect photos for fact sheets and the digital library.
- The Committee discussed the possibility of showcasing Midwest Natural Resource Group information at the Society of Environmental Journalists meeting. Possibilities included having some of our newly developed materials available. Karen Thompson offered to find out more information.
- The Committee also discussed letting each other know, via e-mail and any conference calls we may have, about venues we should be attending as agency information specialists/officers.
- The Committee has not yet set a firm date for the next meeting/conference call. However, a mid-January conference call is in development.
- The next Senior Leaders meeting is February 9-10 (hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division) in Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky. The following meeting will be May 10-11 (hosted by the Forest Service) in Chicago, with possible field visit to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.
 - The May meeting was discussed as an opportunity to invite the media and congressional representatives to tour a focus area.
- Flo Six and Suzanne Fournier offered to co-develop an introductory brochure on the MNRG and its focus areas.
- The Committee talked about bringing the U.S. Forest Service back into the Communications Sub-Committee now that Ken Holtje has retired.
 - U.S. Forest Service Public Affairs Officer Sherry Wagner, Milwaukee, is the expected replacement.
- The Committee discussed initiating a Hammer Award proposal for the MNRG at large.

Midwest Natural Resources Group

*Senior Leaders Meeting
Executive Summary*



*November 3-5, 1999
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*

Agenda

Senior Leaders Meeting

Date/Time	Subject
November 4	
1:00 p.m. - 2:45	Focus Area Reports to Entire MNRG (15 min./Focus Areas = 7)
2:45 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 4:30	Focus Area Reports to Entire MNRG (15 min./Focus Areas = 6)
4:30 - 5:00	General Session Closing Remarks End of MNRG General Session
7:00 - 8:30	Senior Leaders Group Dinner followed by Accomplishment Reporting System Update

November 5	
7:30 a.m. - 7:45	Welcome: William Hartwig U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chair)
7:45 - 8:15	Environmental Streamlining - George Ostensen
8:15 - 8:45	Action Items from Communications Sub-Committee (Communications Sub-Committee present for this portion of meeting)
8:45 - 10:20	Action Items from Focus Areas St. Croix Focus Area Update
10:20 - 10:30	Clean Water Action Plan Update
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 11:00	White House Task Force on Liveable Communities - Karen Hobbs
11:00 - 11:20	Changes in Agencies' Key Issues
11:20 - 11:30	Working Landscapes
11:30 - Noon	Meeting Conclusion Review Action Items Next Meeting Host and Locations Feb. 9-10, 2000 - USACOE - Detroit/Cleveland May 10-11, 2000 - USFS - Midewin Natl. Tallgrass Prairie Next Meeting Agenda Items

Responses for Action Items

Senior Leaders Meeting

The Midwest Natural Resources Group (MNRG) Meeting was held at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, Wisconsin, on November 3-4, 1999. The 12 MNRG focus area teams met on November 3-4, and reported the results of their meetings during a general session of the MNRG. During these reports each of the focus areas provided action items for the Senior Leaders.

The following day the Senior Leaders discussed the action items. This document contains the MNRG focus area's action items and the Senior Leader's responses. Several of the action items were common to more than one focus area and a common response was developed for these action items. Individual responses were developed for action items that were specific to a focus area.

We all realize that without positive outcomes, the MNRG partnership will not be successful. The Senior Leaders hope to assist the focus areas in reducing agency barriers to achieve common actions that will improve the natural resources of the Midwest. By working together, joining agency dollars and efforts, blending GPRA goals and objectives, and supporting efforts to align focus area activities, we will be able to ensure that positive outcomes will result from the MNRG efforts. The Senior Leaders were energized and recommitted to the MNRG after listening to focus area reports that described the progress and accomplishments the focus areas have made during this past year. The Senior Leaders are committed to seeing the efforts of the MNRG succeed and ensure that our agencies at all levels support these efforts.

Action Items Common to More Than One Focus Area

Support for participation in MNRG activities - All Senior Leaders have responsibility for encouraging and supporting their employees involvement in MNRG focus area meetings, conference calls, and the annual meeting. If focus area team members are not participating, the focus area leaders are to inform the Senior Leader for their agency. This Senior Leader will contact the Senior Leader for the agency that the focus area member represents and request agency participation. (This action item was common to the following focus areas: Saginaw River and Bay, Illinois River, Minnesota River, Ohio River, Ozark Plateau, Detroit River/St. Clair River, and Fox River/Green Bay.)

Improved internal and external communication for the MNRG - The Senior Leaders recommended a MNRG web page be developed that highlights each of the focus areas and their activities. The Communications Sub-Committee, as a part of implementing the MNRG Communication Plan, will be working with the focus areas during the development of the web page. (This action item was common to the following focus areas: Saginaw River and Bay, Southern Lake Erie, Ozark Plateau, and Upper Mississippi River Watershed.)

Action Items Common to More Than One Focus Area (continued)

Flexible Funding (Federal to Federal Match) - Karen Hobbs, of the Council on Environmental Quality - White House Task Force for Livable Communities, attended the Senior Leaders meeting and offered to take this action item to the Vice President's Reinvention Office for research assistance into alternative ways to work with matching Federal funding for projects. A concern was mentioned during the discussion that certain communities do not have the same ability to pay or contribute as other communities and this may lead to a form of social injustice. By December 15, 1999, all MNRG agencies are to provide Brigadier General Strock with a paragraph describing appropriation authorization language that limits their agencies ability to match federal funds. He will compile the input and forward it to Karen Hobbs. (This action item was common to the following focus areas: Illinois River, Southern Lake Erie, Ohio River, and Upper Mississippi River Watershed.)

Funding for Focus Areas - The MNRG does not have funding specific to the group. However, the Senior Leaders recognize the importance of the focus areas and will consider the focus areas when agencies are addressing funding. This funding action item includes the specific activity, technical assistance, and long term monitoring (This action item was common to the following focus areas: Illinois River and Detroit River.)

Changes to Map Boundaries - The Senior Leaders agreed that it is difficult to use Midwestern state boundaries for natural resource issues. The MNRG map will be drafted with a lighter shading for areas that continue outside of the state lines. For example, when considering the Ohio River Focus Area, it is important to recognize those parts of the watershed outside of the Midwestern states play an important role in the natural resource issues of the Midwest and the lighter shading will follow the water shed boundaries into the states of Kentucky and Pennsylvania. (This action item was common to the following focus areas: Ohio River, Ozark Plateau, Missouri River, and Detroit River/St. Clair River.)

Action Items Specific to a Focus Area

Saginaw River and Bay Focus Area:

- *Meet at the same time as the Detroit/St. Clair focus area*
The MNRG is supportive of the two focus areas coordinating their meeting times.

Illinois River Focus Area:

- *Review/edit/sign the Interagency Partnership Agreement*
Copies of the Interagency Partnership Agreement were distributed to MNRG Senior Leaders during the November 5, 1999, meeting. Signatures and/or comments are to be provided to Bill Hartwig by the end of November 1999.

Action Items Specific to a Focus Area (continued)

Missouri River Focus Area:

- *Be supportive of MOREAP (Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program) and supportive of looking at setting up a Recovery Committee process.*
The MNRG is supportive of MOREAP and is supportive of looking at a Recovery Committee process.
- *Discussion - Basin Wide membership or membership in the MNRG*
A discussion of the MNRG should be brought up at the January 2000, meeting of the Missouri River Roundtable and the results of this discussion should be included in the MNRG February 2000, meeting. Since the Missouri River Focus Area team members are also members of the Missouri River Roundtable, it may not be necessary for the meetings to be kept separate, as long as they retain the ability to report what has been accomplished in the lower Missouri River and activities that effect the entire river. A way to address the accomplishments would be to include them in a Missouri River Focus Area portion of the MNRG web page and follow up with congressional contacts.

Detroit River/St. Clair River Focus Area:

- *Would like to volunteer to be a pilot project for the MNRG Communications Sub-Committee (develop strategy and tactical implementation)*
The Communications Sub-Committee has agreed to work with the Detroit River/St. Clair River Focus Area.

Great Lakes Focus Area:

- *Lead new major interagency Great Lakes budget initiative*
The MNRG supports the Great Lakes legislation.
- *Support for Great Lakes indicators through State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC)*
Ensure transfer to end user, including common GIS database
The MNRG supports the Great Lakes indicators through SOLEC.
- *Support agency review of ecosystem report*
The MNRG endorses agency review of the ecosystem report.
- *Support Great Lakes Week in Washington, D.C.*
The MNRG supports all agencies meeting with congressional members during "Great Lakes Week."

Action Items Specific to a Focus Area (continued)

Upper Mississippi Watershed Focus Area:

- *Support the USGS website information system as a means for sharing data and information for the Midwest. Encourage an agency buy in to build a pilot for a geographic area, e.g., a state.*
- *Support agency participation in a pilot watershed program to enhance existing local watershed activities and ensure that natural resource management progress is being measured and related goals are being met, i.e. sediment and nutrient management and ecosystem restoration.*
- *Support enhanced agency participation in supplying talent, funding and other resources in ecosystem management activities in the Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRB) and the Midwest.*
- *Continue to support the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.*
- *Support development of a monitoring approach for conservation and ecosystem management activities to accommodate short term and long term outcome measurement.*
- *Support the UMRB Conservation Initiative to bring more focus and resources to bear on local efforts to manage sediment and nutrients. This includes the development of conservation legislation to support local and partnership efforts.*
- *Expand the federal membership of the Senior Group to include Federal Emergency Management Agency, Farm Service Agency, Federal Railroad Administration.*
- *Support formation of a Midwest GIS Work Group to support partnership activities. A pilot activity could be coordinated with the U.S. Geological Survey information management and decision support system. See recommendation one.*

The MNRG supports the Upper Mississippi River Watershed Focus Area involvement in the previously mentioned initiatives/programs and where appropriate, a press release will be issued to demonstrate MNRG support of the initiatives.

The Communications Sub-Committee will be working with the focus areas during the development of the MNRG web page and the Senior Leaders recommend looking at linking the MNRG web page to the USGS web site mentioned in number above.

The Senior Leaders will invite FEMA, FSA, FRA to participate in their next MNRG meeting.

Southern Lake Michigan Focus Area:

- *Attendance at and support for the Beach Conference*
The MNRG supports attendance and participation at the Beach Conference. However, the MNRG does not have funding specific to the group to be able to provide financial support.
- *Monitoring system*
The MNRG endorses scientific monitoring and monitoring for adaptive management.

Midwest Natural Resources Group

Appendix *Focus Area Meeting Notes*



November 3-5, 1999
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

Illinois River

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Action Items

- Involve three District Conservationists in watershed
- Retrospective analysis of existing data and studies
- Identify watershed, sedimentation, geomorphic and hydraulic processes that are inadequately understood
- Formulate study plan that will address issues above and determine remediation measures
- Energize local partners and stakeholders
- Conduct study
- Design remedial measures
- Assimilate federal, state and local programs that can be used for “on-the-ground” activities
- Implement remedial measures
- Monitor, on a long term basis, after remediation
- Once project is established, move on to other issues and problems

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Increase and energize support at the Regional/Headquarters level
- Review/Edit/Sign the Interagency Partnership Agreement
- Allocate funding for the study
- allocate funding for technical assistance
- Allocate funding for implementation
- Increase flexibility of programs
 - Allow federal funds to match federal funds for programs
- Commit to funding for long term monitoring

Targeted Focus Area Activity

Crow Creek Watershed

- Weis Lake
- Goose Lake

Implementation of Remediation

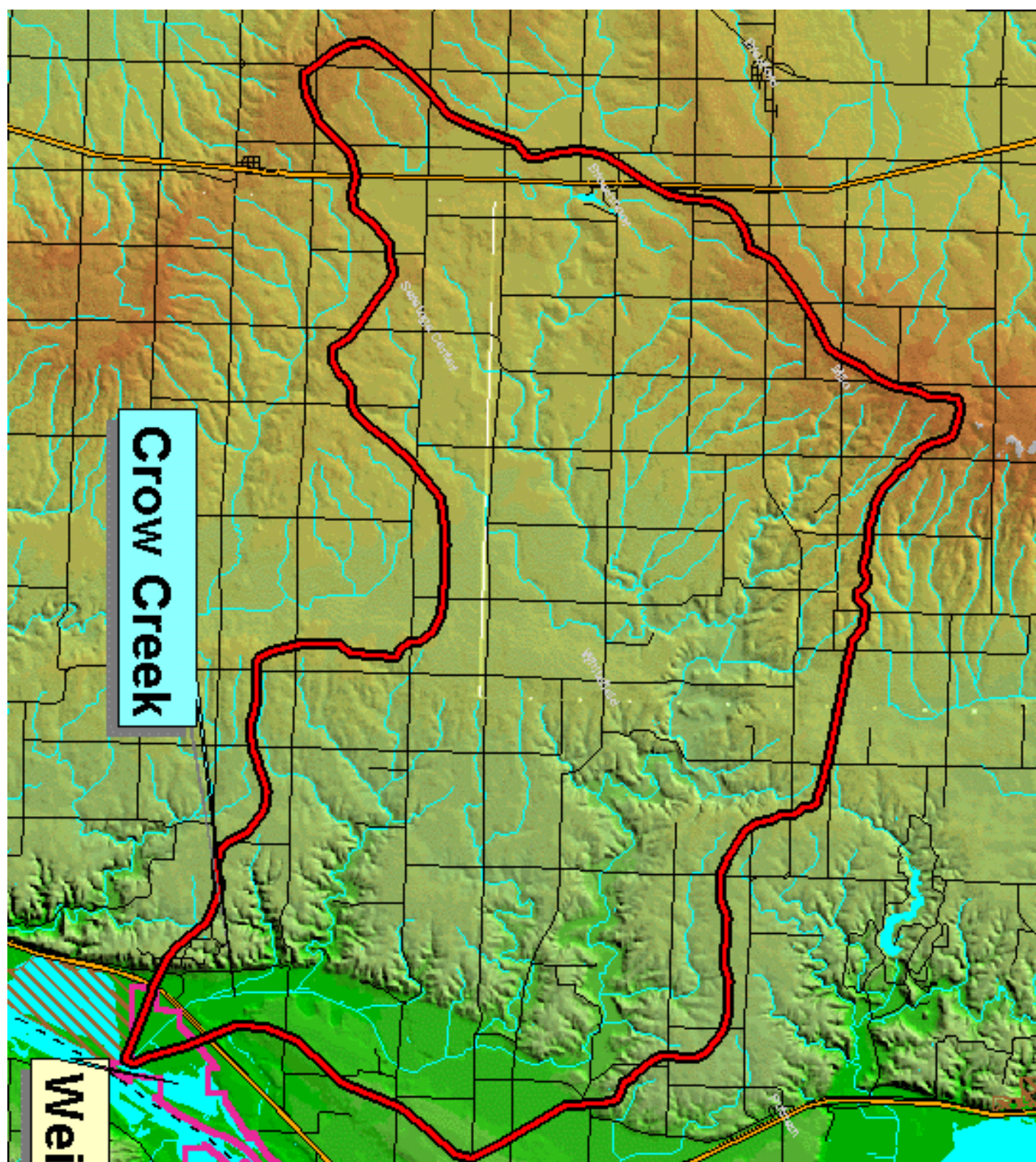
Currently limited - system dynamics are not well understood

Major Issue

Loss of Weis Lake and Goose Lake from the effect of sedimentation

Side Issues and Factors

- Channelization (1920's, 1950's)
- Water quality
- Soil erosion
- Flooding
- Loss of waterfowl habitat
- Reduction of waterfowl use
- Reduction of fish use
- Reduction of hunting and fishing opportunities
- Loss of private wetlands



Weis Lake

Refuge Boundary

Little River

15000

15000

15000

0 1

N S W

PROPOSED DRAFT AGREEMENT

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

between the
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
MARITIME ADMINISTRATION
and the
U.S. COAST GUARD

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into this _____ day of _____, 2000 between the Department of Agriculture, by and through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (hereinafter referred to as the "NRCS") represented by the State Conservationist; the Department of the Army, by and through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (hereinafter referred to as the "Corps") represented by the District Engineer; the Department of the Interior, acting by and through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (hereinafter referred to as the "Service") represented by the Regional Director; and the U.S. Geological Survey (hereinafter referred to as the "Survey") represented by the District Chief; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (hereinafter referred to as the "EPA") represented by the Regional Administrator; the Federal Highway Administration (hereinafter referred to as the "FHWA") represented by the Division Administrator; the Maritime Administration (hereinafter referred to as "MARAD") represented by the Regional Director; and the U.S. Coast Guard (hereinafter referred to as the "Coast Guard") represented by the District Commander.

WITNESSTH THAT;

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 as amended, Public Law 74-46, 16 U.S.C. 590 a-f, the objective of the NRCS is to plan and carry out a national soil and water conservation program, and to provide leadership in conservation, development, and productive use of the nation's Natural Resources.

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, 33 U.S.C. 401 *et. seq.*, the Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended, and the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution, the Corps has primary jurisdiction over all navigable waters of the United States; and,

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, Section 1103, the Corps is the primary agency responsible for implementing the Environmental Management Program for habitat restoration and long term monitoring of natural resources on the Upper Mississippi River System; and,

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929, the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the Emergency Wetlands Act of 1986, the Service is the primary federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing America's fish and wildlife resources and their habitats; and,

WHEREAS, under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 the Service has initiated a multi-year planning process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges; and,

WHEREAS, under the authorities of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Clean Water Act of 1972, the EPA is the primary federal agency responsible for restoring and protecting the quality of America's waters; and,

WHEREAS, under the authority of 23 U.S.C., the FHWA is the primary federal agency providing funds and technical assistance to state transportation agencies responsible for highway infrastructure and mitigation of impacts resulting from highway construction and maintenance activities; and

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Organic Act of 1879, 20 Stat.394; 43 U.S.C. 31, the Survey is the primary federal agency responsible for providing geologic, topographic, and hydrologic information that contributes to the wise management of the Nation's natural resources and that promotes the health, safety, and well-being of the people; and,

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination of 1956, 16 U.S.C. 661 *et. seq.*, NRCS, the Corps, the Service, the Survey, EPA, FHWA, MARAD, and the Coast Guard desire to enter into this Agreement to promote cooperation and coordination between the parties as they pursue their individual project goals; and,

WHEREAS, all parties are interested in planning for the restoration, preservation, and protection of wetlands and aquatic ecosystems within the Illinois River Basin; and,

WHEREAS, all parties are interested in increasing the quantity, quality, and diversity of habitats and species within the Illinois River Basin; and,

WHEREAS, all parties are interested in providing the public with additional high quality recreation and environmental education opportunities in the Illinois River Basin; and,

WHEREAS, all parties are interested in providing the public with a safe, efficient, effective and environmentally responsible highway and intermodal system that serves the Illinois River Basin; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, the NRCS, the Corps, the Service, the Survey, EPA, FHWA, MARAD and the Coast Guard agree as follows:

SCOPE OF COOPERATION

A. The NRCS, the Corps, the Service, the Survey, EPA, FHWA, MARAD, and the Coast Guard shall work, in partnership with state and local governments, non-government organizations, and private landowners and individuals, to restore and protect the ecological integrity of the Illinois River Basin in a manner consistent with reducing flood damage, protection of private property rights, and maintaining an effective navigation system.

B. Designated agency representatives will utilize existing opportunities when practical such as the Federal Issues Working Group of the Illinois River Coordinating Committee, the Environmental Management Program Coordination Committee and the Illinois River Focus Area Team of the Midwest Natural Resources Working Group to closely coordinate and integrate the goals of the agencies. Agency representatives will strive to use existing authorities, plans, and programs of said agencies to collectively support restoration of selected high priority site specific projects. These designated representatives of each agency will participate in the scoping process; plan formulation and analyses, meetings, reviews and other agreement related activities. In addition to the team members' internal review, draft documents of each agency's study or plan will be provided to the other agencies for review and comment before being released to the news media or members of Congress. The cost of individual agencies external review and personnel participation in the team process shall be borne by that agency.

C. The Crow Creek Watershed including Weis Lake (Cameron Division of the Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge) and Goose Lake (Sparland Unit of the Marshall County Fish and Wildlife Area) was identified as an initial site specific project for the Illinois River Focus Area. Public meetings, agency meetings, and on-site visits reflect the need for collective action to restore the watershed including the bottomland lakes.

The Illinois River Focus Area Team will evaluate the need for action and develop a strategic plan.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The NRCS shall be responsible for:

1. Providing technical assistance to landowners for habitat restoration and to the local Crow Creek Watershed Working Group for developing a Resource Conservation Plan.
2. Educating private landowners regarding programs available for protecting soils and restoring fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.
3. Identify funding available to private landowners and provide technical assistance for implementing conservation practices that will reduce runoff and erosion and restore fish and wildlife habitat.

B. The Corps shall be responsible for:

1. A study, formulation and implementation of plans to include watershed protection and restoration of floodplain and backwater ecosystems within the Illinois River Basin with Non-Federal sponsor support.
2. Providing a restoration model for future watershed project design that includes restoration of degraded backwater lakes given Non-Federal sponsor support.
3. Coordination and consulting with the Service on impacts to aquatic and terrestrial species, federally protected species and habitat located within the Illinois River Basin.

C. The Service shall be responsible for:

1. The formulation and implementation of a comprehensive conservation plan for the Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges that will:

- a. restore and enhance all native animals and plants that are endangered or threatened;
- b. restore and preserve a diversity and abundance of native flora and fauna;
- c. perpetuate migratory bird resources;
- d. provide the public with high quality wildlife dependent recreational and educational opportunities within the Illinois River Corridor; and
- e. address watershed protection issues as they relate to the resources of the Illinois River and its tributaries.

2. The administration, maintenance, and management of lands and waters designated as the Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges in ways that will perpetuate the native biological diversity of the Illinois River for the enjoyment and use by the public when compatible.

3. Provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for restoring wetlands and other fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

D. The Survey shall be responsible for:

1. Providing technical assistance and support in development of the comprehensive conservation plan and site specific restoration plans.

2. Providing technical assistance in evaluating the success of projects by assessing changes in water-quality and quantity, vegetative cover, and biological diversity.

3. Collecting and disseminating available streamflow and groundwater quantity and quality data, as well as collecting data as funding permits.

E. The EPA shall be responsible for:

1. Administering state grant assistance program for implementing watershed restoration and providing incentives for private land stewardship.

F. The FHWA shall be responsible for:

1. Ensuring that environmental decisions involving highway improvements have fully considered options to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts and, where possible, enhance the natural environment.

2. Participating, to the fullest extent permitted by law, in funding mitigation and enhancement activities for highway related impacts to the natural environment.

G. The MARAD shall be responsible for:

1. Providing technical assistance and support for the comprehensive conservation plan and site specific restoration plans as they relate to MARAD mandates of promoting waterborne commerce, national defense, and environmental compliance.

2. Provide technical assistance and direct liaison with commercial and recreational navigation needs associated with changes in waterway resource management.
3. Provide technical assistance in the review of construction permit applications for river-front facilities that may impact commercial and recreational navigation.
4. Provide technical assistance in determining constraints to safe and efficient commercial and recreational navigation, such as placement of locks and dams, bridges, marinas, private and public docks, etc.

NOTICE

A. Any notice, request, demand, or other communication required or permitted to be given under this Agreement shall be deemed to have been duly given if in writing and either delivered personally or by telegram or mailed first-class, registered, or certified mail, as follows:

For NRCS:
State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
1902 Fox Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61820

For the Survey:
District Chief
U.S. Geological Survey
221 North Broadway Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61801

For the Corps:
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Clock Tower Building , P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2002

For EPA:
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code R19-J, 77West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

For the Service:
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056

For the FHWA:
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration - Illinois Div.
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703

For MARAD:
Regional Director
Maritime Administration - USDOT
2860 South River Road - Suite 185
Des Plaines, Illinois 60018-2413

For the Coast Guard:
Commander, Ninth District
U.S. Coast Guard
1240 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44199-2069

B. A party may change the address to which such communications are to be directed by giving written notice to the other parties in the manner provided in this Article.

C. Any notice, request, demand, or other communication made pursuant to this Article shall be deemed to have been received by the addressee at the earlier of such time as it actually received or seven (7) calendar days after it is mailed.

TRANSFER OF FUNDS AND FINAL AUDIT

In the event that the parties to this Agreement determine that funds should be transferred between the parties, prior to any such funds transfer the parties shall determine that there exists a statutory basis permitting the transfer. Any such funds transfer shall use the appropriate inter-agency procedures. In the event that funds are transferred between the parties to this Agreement, a final audit shall be conducted not later than thirty (30) calendar days after the termination of this Agreement. The agencies of this Agreement shall develop procedures, in accordance with federal law and regulation, or keeping books, record, documents, and other evidence pertaining to costs and expenses incurred pursuant to this Agreement.

MODIFICATION AND TERMINATION

The parties to this Agreement shall, by mutual consent, be able to modify this Agreement upon thirty (30) days written notice. This Agreement shall continue in existence until terminated by any or all parties to this Agreement upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other parties. In the event any party elects to terminate this Agreement all parties shall conclude their activities relating to this Agreement and proceed to a final accounting in accordance with this Agreement. IN WITHESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement, which shall become effective upon the date when all parties have signed said Agreement.

Minnesota River

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Major Challenges and Opportunities

- A vast majority of land is in private ownership
- Non-point source pollution is the major cause of water quality degradation

Facts

- 95 percent of the population is located in five percent of the basin
- Greater than 90 percent of the area is in agricultural production
- Greater than 90 percent of native prairie wetlands have been lost or degraded
- Greater than 99 percent of native tallgrass prairies have been lost

Action Items

- Complement existing partnerships
- Identify and protect remnant tallgrass prairie tracts
- Restore wetlands in the upper reaches of sub-watersheds
- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must accelerate the Wetlands Reserve Program

Accomplishments

- Clean Water Action Plan funds used by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for stream bank stabilization and wetland restoration
- Natural Resources Conservation Service established four Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) priority areas
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team has committed to provide assistance in the Minnesota River Focus Area
- Focus Area partners include: U.S. Geological Survey, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Joint Powers Board, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Shakopee Sioux Tribe

Approach

Acquisition

- Fee or Easement

Cooperation

- Voluntary
- U.S. Department of Agriculture technical assistance

Regulation

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency feedlot operations regulations

Education

- Rural and metropolitan
- Recreations uses
- Best land use practices

Help Us Along The Way

Natural Resources Conservation Service and Joint Powers Board

- Accounting of technical and financial assistance within the basin
- *Where can Focus Area Teams fit in?*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with congressional, state and local interests

- Redwood River sub-watershed study of resource restoration, flood damage reduction, etc.
- *Can this be a model for others?*

Targeted Focus Area Activity

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

- Acquisition of lands
- Lead Agencies: Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Lower Sioux Reservation

- 1,750 acres of trust land
- Identify, restore and manage wetlands
- Lead Agencies: Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area

- Land cover inventory and classification
- Lead Agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

Provide top-down support and encouragement to ensure agency representatives can be available and active Focus Area Team Members

Missouri River

Focus Area Meeting Notes

“Shared River - Shared Vision”

Status of the Missouri River Focus Area

The Missouri River Focus Area held its second team meeting October 19-20, 1999 at the National Park Service's Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska. Thirteen people representing eight federal agencies came together at this meeting, most of whom were experiencing the Focus Area team, and the Midwest Natural Resources Group process and function, for the first time. Agencies present included: Western Area Power Administration, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Park Service. Five member agencies sent no representatives.

At this meeting, the Focus Area team discussed the following topics:

1. Each agency team member provided an update on their agency's current Missouri River activities.
2. The team members explored possible interagency interest in working together to more efficiently and effectively address various environmental mandates that they all have to work under, such as Executive Orders on energy efficiency, affirmative procurement, environmental justice, etc.
3. The team members identified possible new projects or opportunities within this geographic Focus Area that could benefit from an interagency approach.
4. There was team discussion regarding Senators Kerrey's (D-NE) and Bond's (R-MO) Missouri River enhancement bills pending before Congress and their possible implications for the Missouri River and its resources if passed.
5. There was team discussion on how the Focus Area agencies can work together more efficiently and effectively to implement the Clean Water Action Plan.
6. Each agency representative provided an update on their agency's current Lewis and Clark Bicentennial plans and activities.

Items 1 and 6 updated team members on the current activities of the different agencies regarding the Missouri River and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration, and will not be detailed here.

Item 5 experienced some discussion but was dropped from further discussion at this time since a key agency relative to the Clean Water Action Plan – the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – was not represented at this meeting. Their absence significantly reduced the effectiveness of the team's discussion of the topic.

Significant and lively discussions did take place, however, on the remaining three topics (2, 3 and 4). These discussions resulted in the following conclusions and recommendations.

TOPIC 2: The team members explored possible interagency interest in working together to more efficiently and effectively address various environmental mandates that they all have to work under, such as Executive Orders on energy efficiency, affirmative procurement, environmental justice, etc.

CONCLUSION I: The team concluded that the best way we, as federal agencies, could address the various environmental mandates referenced under this topic is to continue to hold interagency discussions, such as this Focus Area team meeting, and to continue to promote regular inter-agency communications on such matters.

Recommendation A: The federal member agencies within this Missouri River Focus Area could establish a set representative for each agency who would function in an “ombudsman” capacity to facilitate interagency communications and coordination on different matters of common importance. This person would be able to provide information to other agencies or answer their questions directly, or could direct the inquirer to the best person or office within the agency to get their questions answered.

Recommendation B: The Missouri River Focus Area and its member agencies should maximize its use of and involvement in the many meetings and forums that already exist within the Basin (e.g., the “Missouri River Natural Resources Conference”). By doing so, the agencies could promote and provide information on federal goals, projects, and accomplishments relative to the Missouri River Basin and could be well placed to identify and engage other stakeholders.

Discussions on this topic expanded to revisit the definition of the Missouri River Focus Area’s geographic boundaries. The “Midwest Natural Resources Group” (MNRG) has currently defined the boundary as extending from the eastern end of the basin west to include the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas. Hydrologically and geographically, this definition falls short of addressing the true extent of the basin and its resources. The team questioned whether the MNRG boundary would be functionally adequate in helping the Focus Area achieve its purpose, particularly with regard to establishing an effective federal presence to promote the long-term protection and enhancement of the Missouri River Basin’s natural resources, and recommended that the boundary be expanded to include the entire basin. The team stated that this action is especially necessary since another federal forum, the “Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable,” is also working in a manner parallel to that of the Focus Area. Team members recognized that this situation could be resulting in unnecessary duplication of expenditures and efforts by two federal interagency organizations to achieve similar goals for the same resources within mostly the same geographic region. This situation violates a basic tenet of both of these federal forums, namely, to reduce unnecessary duplication at the federal level. Therefore, the team voted to recommend that the boundary of the Missouri River Focus Area be extended to include the entire basin.

CONCLUSION II: The functional boundaries of the Missouri River Focus Area should be established to most efficiently and effectively facilitate the Federal Government’s ability to promote long-term protection and enhancement for the Missouri River Basin’s natural resources.

Recommendation A: The Missouri River Focus Area member agencies should define the optimum functional (geographic) boundary for the Focus Area in order to maximize the ability of its member agencies to provide an effective federal presence to promote the long-term protection and enhancement of the Missouri River Basin’s natural resources.

Recommendation B: After an optimum functional boundary for the Missouri River Focus Area has been established from Recommendation “A” above, this information should be shared with the MNRG and the “Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable”. A determination should then be made by these organizations as to which federal forum would best serve the ongoing purpose of the Missouri River Focus Area, based on the revised definition of the Focus Area’s optimum functional boundary and taking into account the overall purposes of each organization. If it is determined that the Focus Area’s purpose and needs could best be served in association with the “Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable,” then the Focus Area should become part of that federal forum and dissolved from the MNRG.

TOPIC 3: The team members identified possible new projects or opportunities within this geographic Focus Area that could benefit from an interagency approach.

CONCLUSION: The team concluded that there are several possible ways that the Federal Government could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its agencies within the Missouri River Focus Area. This could especially be achieved through (1) renewed agency commitment to existing agreements and cooperative ventures, and (2) by seeking out existing and establishing new interagency cooperative projects or activities based on mutual legislative mandates, interests and needs. As they do this, the agencies present agreed to continue to work with Native Americans on a government-to-government basis and will make an effort to solicit their comments whenever they may be affected.

Recommendation A: Focus Area agencies should work in collaboration with state, local, tribal, and non-governmental organizations to (1) refine the details that will be necessary for the successful implementation and functioning of the “Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program” (MoREAP), and (2) implement the MoREAP as soon as funding is available. It should be noted that during the 1998 convocation of the MNRG, the Focus Area had endorsed the MoREAP as its highest priority project for support by this federal organization.

Recommendation B: Federal agencies that are signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between those agencies and the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council for the purpose of collaborating to commemorate the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition should reconfirm their active participation in that MOU. This recommendation is made to help ensure that implementation of this MOU (and any other similar agreement among federal partners) will indeed result in a shared effort by all parties and not just by a dedicated few.

Recommendation C: The Focus Area agencies desire to actively promote interagency cooperation in floodplain and wetland management as it relates to the Missouri River Basin. This is particularly relevant with regard to agency compliance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 1977 (42 FR 26951; 3 CFR 121 [Supp. 177]) and Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 1977 (42 FR 26961; 3 CFR 121 [Supp. 177]; 42 USC 4321).

Recommendation D: The Focus Area agencies desire to actively coordinate and promote interagency education and outreach programs and activities involving the Missouri River and its resources. Some examples of these include helping to establish direct Internet links to sites such as the “Missouri River INFOLINK” and other federal, state, tribal, and local information sources, and to actively promote the “Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable’s” “Discover a Watershed” project.

TOPIC 4: There was team discussion regarding the Senators Kerry's (D-NE and Bond's (R-MO) Missouri River enhancement bills pending before Congress and their possible implications for the Missouri River and its resources if passed.

CONCLUSION: The team concluded that both Missouri River enhancement bills would, if funded by Congress, provide a wide range of opportunities for federal interagency collaboration in the promotion of the long-term protection and enhancement of Missouri River natural resources. Until final versions of these bills are funded, however, the team felt that there was very little practical reason to discuss them further.

At this point in the discussion, the team again returned to a observation of their earlier discussion that the Missouri River Focus Area appears to be working in parallel to the "Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable," and perhaps should be part of that organization.

Recommendation A: If the Missouri River Focus Area does become incorporated within the "Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable," then it was agreed that the new affiliation should strive to include at least the same variety of federal agencies within the MNRG, if applicable, and not less.

Recommendation B: If Recommendation "A" is implemented, the "Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable" should also adopt a two-tiered structure consisting of senior managers and staff-level "coordinators" or project-related people who would meet during the same interactive session.

Recommendation C: If Recommendation "A" is implemented, the "Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable" should also try to coordinate its meetings with those of the "Missouri River Natural Resources Conference" in order to more effectively coordinate the activities of both groups relative to the basin's natural resource needs. This might extend the overall meeting period for some people by an extra ½ to one full day, but this should be counterbalanced by creating a situation offering significantly greater efficiency for interactions between agencies, tribes, professionals, multiple levels of government, and stakeholders.

Relationship of the Missouri River Focus Area to the Environmental Roundtable

Missouri River Focus Area team members representing only four member agencies (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) met again at the Midwest Natural Resources Group's Meeting at lake Delavan, Wisconsin.

The team reviewed the report and recommendations from the Omaha meeting with most of the discussion revolving around what role the Focus Area should have with another federal organization, the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable (MRBIR). These discussions centered on a major feature of the October meeting which was whether it would be more efficient for the Focus Area to merge and combine their efforts with the MRBIR and thus function on a truly ecosystem-wide scale for the entire Missouri River Basin, or continue with the existing arrangement of partial basin coverage through the MNRG.

Currently, a significant portion of the watershed, along with the jurisdictions of several regions of federal natural resource management agencies that are members of the Midwest Natural Resources Group, are not included in the Focus Area's geographic boundary.

Recommended Projects for the Missouri River Focus Area

Based on this discussion of the Focus Area team's October deliberations, the team's November MNRG meeting recommends to the Midwest Natural Resources Senior Manager's Group the following two projects for the Focus Area:

“Livable Land” (Missouri River Interagency Land Acquisition/Conservation Easement Strategy): The Focus Area team proposes to host a meeting of all agencies and groups that are either purchasing land or attempting to place land in conservation easements along the Missouri River. The purpose of this meeting is to promote inter-organizational communications and to establish strategic-level coordination among these parties in order to facilitate the most efficient use of personnel and financial resources.

It is also intended to help avoid the creation of a hodgepodge checkerboard of land in federal and state ownership or under conservation easement that ultimately accomplishes little for the Missouri River ecosystem. Instead, the Focus Area team reasoned that it would be better to try to identify areas where acquisition or conservation easement would do the most good, and possibly establish larger or contiguous blocks of land that would be more manageable.

The team is also interested in investigating whether an interagency approach to land acquisition or conservation easement can be established to provide greater effectiveness to such efforts.

Such an interagency meeting could be a single-purpose one-time event or it could be combined with other large meetings that occur annually in connection with the Missouri River.

The Focus Area team recognizes that care will need to be taken to accomplish this worthy objective (i.e., leveraging the management effectiveness of Missouri River lands acquired and placed in conservation easement) of this project without resulting in a federal or state “taking” of private lands along the river and its tributary floodplain corridors. Stakeholders (e.g., farmers and other private landowners, riverfront communities, etc.) could be transported to other locations where similar actions have been successful. One example is the Iowa River Corridor, which is a exemplary river greenbelt where small communities and landowners have benefitted from parks, trails, and light recreational developments in a floodplain greenbelt corridor design along the Iowa River in east-central Iowa.

“Healthy Waters” (Aquatic Habitat Protection and Enhancement Program):

The Focus Area team proposes to facilitate the synthesis and interpretation of water quality data throughout the entire Missouri River watershed in order to provide an overview picture of the quality of this ecosystem's aquatic habitat. Many different governmental agencies and entities (e.g., citizen's groups, tribes, educational institutions) are collecting and compiling water quality information throughout the Missouri River Basin. It would be helpful to first merge this data into a common, easily usable geographic information system (GIS) format so that areas needing additional protection or restoration can be identified and targeted for conservation protection.

The project's goal for its first year would be to determine if the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or any other agency has attempted to compile and/or interpret water quality information on a basin-wide scale for the Missouri. If not, the Focus Area team could host a meeting of all groups involved in the collection of water quality data and determine (1) if comprehensive layers of GIS water quality data are already available for the Missouri River and its tributaries, and (2) determine if a basin-wide interagency collaborative approach for establishing GIS-based water quality data for the Missouri River Basin is feasible. Next, the adequacy of this data must be determined and whether or not it is sufficient to allow for the proposal of management recommendations. Once adequate data is in place in a useful format, the Missouri River Basin's critical aquatic resource areas that are experiencing water quality problems can be targeted and recommendations for rehabilitative management can be made for them. For example, the Natural Resources Conservation Service might focus on establishing riparian filter strips in tributary watersheds where GIS data indicated high levels of sediment and/or chemical runoff.

Once this data system has been established, the Focus Area team could be instrumental in attempting to establish an ecosystem-wide dialog among all agencies and organizations interested in water quality within the basin. That, in turn, could possibly lead to the creation of a new and special forum to promote continued communications and collaboration on these issues.

Action Items Submitted for Consideration by the Senior Managers

Support for the (MoREAP)

The Senior Managers should support the MoREAP (Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program) as authorized (presently without a funding appropriation for FY 2000) in Senate Bill 1279, introduced by Senator Bob Kerrey (D-NE). Scientific monitoring and research information of the kind that MoREAP would provide would be essential to:

1. Recovery of threatened and endangered fish and wildlife along the Missouri River, including the effective functioning of an interagency Recovery Committee;
2. Adaptive management of all flow-related aspects of the Missouri River that will result from implementation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' new Master Manual (i.e., the proposed reservoir operation and flow release scheme) alternative as it will affect recreation, navigation, fish and wildlife, flood control, water quality, etc.;
3. Documenting and reporting the progress of the adaptive management process through various outreach methodologies to enlist public support. For example, an article could be contributed to an upcoming issue of the Midwest Natural Resources Group newsletter, to the "Missouri River Monitor," or similar publication.

The Senior Managers should remind congressional members and their staff of the critical nature of the MoREAP data to all aspects of the Missouri River ecosystem at every opportunity. Additional methods of notification, such as an interagency letter or joint briefing session.

Senior Managers should also discuss:

1. Support the Missouri River Endangered Species Recovery Committee Process

In a similar manner to that suggested above, the Senior Managers should support the concept of an interagency Recovery Committee to oversee and guide the recovery of threatened and endangered species along the Missouri River.

2. Future Role for the Missouri River Focus Area

The Senior Managers should discuss the future role of the Missouri River Focus Area and its possible integration into and/or interaction with the MRBIR. For example, should the Focus Area secede from the MNRG and combine with the MRBIR (as recommended by the Focus Area team), thus giving the team a true basin-wide perspective? Or should the Focus Area team try to fully participate in both of these federal interagency organizations? One possible solution would be for the Focus Area team to effectively transfer its function to the MRBIR, but send a representative to the MNRG's annual meetings to report on its activities and integrate the MNRG's needs and concerns into its agenda of projects and work items.

Ohio River

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Accomplishments

- Found commonality within all agencies and opened lines of communication
- Face-to-face coordination has eased adversarial posturing and help with several projects
 - Ohio River Mainstem Navigation Study
 - Openly exploring ways to solve problems with pool fluctuations
 - Increase opportunity for partnership on upcoming Lewis and Clark celebration

Action Items

- Need to better define geographic area
- Need to further identify and define stakeholders
- Work with Office of Surface Mining programs which may allow federal funds to match federal funds to complete coal mine restoration projects
- A focus area meeting with federal, state and industrial partners will be set within the next year to discuss ways to reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources from Ohio River navigation operations

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Monday Creek watershed in Ohio
 - Initially funding was available but it fell through due to local partners inability to cost-share
 - Continue working to secure funding for project

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Need to encourage agencies to allocate needed resources and personnel for meetings and projects
- Evaluate the focus area member states
 - Ohio River watershed extends well beyond the Midwest
 - Should non-Midwest states be included?
- Develop ways to assist local governments with cost-sharing shortages

Ohio River Focus Area (Continued)

The Ohio River Focus Area Team has not yet developed a project of our own volition. Wetlands Restoration and acid mine drainage projects in southern Ohio's Wayne National Forest area fell through because of local partners inability to provide cost-share funding. This project included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Office of Surface Mining.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District is continuing activity in the area by leading partners in investigating ways to reduce flood damage by developing watershed features such as headwater retention basins, and raising or removing structures from the floodway.

To date, the greatest value of the Focus Area Team has been to open general lines of communication among agencies. This increase communication is helping to ease adversarial posturing, resolve old problems and has provided real benefits to current projects.

Examples include:

The Ohio River Mainstem Navigation Study. A spin-off of this project has been an effort to find authorities and funds to restore numerous backwater embayments and critical substrate areas in the channel, in addition to reestablishing floodplain wetlands and riparian zones.

The long-standing argument over who is responsible for pool fluctuations between the Hannibal and Racine Locks and Dams is now being actively investigated. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and West Virginia Department of Natural Resources hydraulics and fisheries experts are holding interagency informational meetings with local partners to explain the causes of the fluctuations and explore options to minimize them.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Office of Surface Mining have been partnering with the Monday Creek Restoration Project watershed group in southern Ohio. These agencies are investigating ways to combine resources and help local partners with Acid Mine Drainage remediation, ecosystem restoration, and flood damage reduction. Some specific aspects of these efforts have not been accomplished due to local funding constraints. However, many of the projects are moving forward

The National Park Service is partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and numerous other agencies along the Ohio River preparing for the Lewis and Clark celebration.

A meeting with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various state conservation agencies and industrial partners is currently being planned. The goal of this meeting will be to identify ways to reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources from Ohio River navigation operations. Items that could be discussed include: minor modifications to channel marker alignment to avoid sensitive fish and wildlife resource areas, and need for emergency/local mooring cells/buoys to minimize mooring in environmentally sensitive areas.

Ohio River Focus Area (Continued)

Team participants have discovered that current local cost-sharing requirements are a major problem throughout much of the region. National economic prosperity has not found its way into the depressed Appalachian and farm regions along the lower river. The team continues to look for ways to assist local partners by resolving their problems through technical assistance, grants, and programs requiring minimal local cash. We are also exploring agency grants that may assist local partners with matching other agency cost-share requirements. To date only Office of Surface Mining grants have been determined clearly eligible for this purpose. U.S Environmental Protection Agency 319 grants are being checked.

BOTTOM LINE: The Midwest Natural Resources Group is having positive results. Developing Midwest Natural Resource Group driven activities is not a #1 priority for most agencies involved. However, the spin-off value of meeting, with the goal of looking for mutually supportable projects, is dulling the adversarial edge between agencies on potentially hot projects. Putting faces with names and working on potential issues before they grow into interagency conflicts is working to accelerate project progress without compromising resource benefits.

Ozark Plateau

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Priority for Ozark Plateau: Water Quality

Problems

- Nutrients and non-point source pollution
- Gravel mining
- Old and new lead and zinc mines
- Chip mills
- Rapid population growth
- Stream habitat degradation

Action Items

- Better agency involvement
 - Contact other federal agencies that are not present
- Meet with:
 - Missouri State Water Quality Coordination Committee in the Ozarks (Jan. - Feb. 2000)
 - U.S. Geological Survey Cooperators Conference (April 2000)
- Share information about the Midwest Natural Resources Group within our agencies

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Water quality in White River basin
- Focus on James River
- High priority in Missouri and Arkansas
- Current federal agency activity is high
- Many opportunities for partnerships
- Strong grassroots support in the area
 - James River Partnership
 - Watershed Committee of the Ozarks

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- There needs to be a renewed commitment to the Midwest Natural Resources Group by the Senior leaders
- Senior leaders need to address the degree of political boundaries (i.e. regional and state) within the focus areas
- Develop a continuity plan so there is a reduction in overlap between agencies, states and regions
- Must develop better ways to help agencies communicate, partner, and share activities and ideas
- Ozark Plateau boundary must be revised (i.e. National Water Quality Assessment map)

Upper Mississippi Watershed

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Accomplishments

- The U.S. Geological Survey Geographic Information System (GIS) project produced an information system for sharing and linking resource data and progress among agencies and other partners
- Establishment of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Initiative to support additional resources for conservation in the Upper Mississippi River Basin through legislative and other processes
- Began the process of selecting watersheds for additional partnership participation
- Initiated discussions of a working landscape initiative involving federal and private sector interests to foster environmental and economic benefits in land use

Action Items

- Work better together
- Better use of resources (i.e. pooling resources and talent)
- Sustain and enhance a viable, healthy ecosystem

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Support the U.S. Geological Survey website information system as a means for sharing data and information for the Midwest. Encourage agency buy-in to build a pilot for a geographic area
- Support agency participation in a pilot watershed program to enhance existing local watershed activities and ensure that natural resource management progress is being measured and related goals are being met (i.e. sediment and nutrient management and ecosystem restoration)
- Support enhanced agency participation in supplying talent, funding and other resources in ecosystem management activities in the Upper Mississippi River basin and the Midwest
- Continue to support the American Heritage Rivers Program
- Support development of a monitoring approach for conservation and ecosystem management activities to accommodate short term and long term outcome measurement
- Support the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Initiative to bring more focus and resources to bear on local efforts to manage sediment and nutrients. This initiative includes the development of conservation legislation to support local and partnership efforts
- Support a communication program to assist in telling the appropriate story of partnership effort outcomes
- Support flexibility in the use of federal funds in natural resource management such as coordinating federal acquisition plans
- Expand the federal membership of the Senior Leaders Group to include Federal Emergency Management Agency, Farm Services Agency and Federal Railroad Administration
- Support the formation of a Midwest Geographic Information System (GIS) Work Group to support partnership activities. A pilot activity could be coordinated with the U.S. Geological Survey Information Management and Decision Support System (see first recommendation)

ISSUES

1. What are reportable Roundtable activities
2. Different perspectives for different agencies
3. What uses will Senior Managers make of information
4. Need better definition of reportable activities by Senior Managers
5. Issue based activity reporting
6. Ecosystem based activities leading to resource health and enhancement
7. Matrix of issues
8. New areas for nutrient work [USGS]
9. Use Roundtable for defining new areas
10. Adding value to ongoing activities
11. Develop tools
12. Strategies for adding efficiency and value
13. Identify areas in need of investment
14. Sharing information for local decision making, i.e. watershed models and studies
15. How to work better together
16. Size of basin is problematic
17. Measure results of watershed activities, i.e. monitoring
18. Federal relations with states
19. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) activities are uncoordinated
20. Partnership watershed activities and studies
21. Inter-regional management gaps, i.e. joint watershed studies
22. Challenge Senior Managers to structure work to prioritize funds, activities and projects, even redirect resources
23. How do federal officials get involved in local watershed activities
24. Fund-raising
25. Long term process of relationship building and activities
26. Matching agencies' missions and goals with project needs, i.e. USGS biologic and water resource activities
27. Fit agencies goals to issues and fill gaps
28. Adjust federal management to enhance partner activities
29. Find how to work cooperatively
30. Improve communications
31. Identify and remove barriers to working together
32. Watershed model
33. Effective use of resources
34. Effective communications
35. Effective local participation and leadership
36. Select an ongoing project [model]

37. Bring agency resources to bear
38. Examine federal funding sources available to others
39. Understand who is doing what, where and when
40. NRCS resources, i.e. a major resource is technical assistance for planning
41. Work better together through communications and joining resources
42. Don't make this activity too complicated
43. Doing business together better through common areas of interest, mission, goals and activities Report highlights of joint-partner activities, i.e. Pool 8 Drawdown Project
44. Need multifaceted communications, common messages and often repeated
45. Look for opportunities for cooperation and synergism
46. Project examples are Pool 8 Drawdown and the Whitewater Watershed
47. Reporting by newsletter for a Focus Area or the Midwest

USGS Matrix: a presentation and discussion

Information management needed for information overload, i.e. making sense of data

1. Assists in reaching collaboration and partnership
2. Locate current and planned activities
3. Basis for effective communications
4. GIS layers: what USGS and others are doing in geographic areas
5. Barriers: agency buy in and updating data
6. A communications website for agencies
7. May be extended to reporting of accomplishments if so desired and supported by agencies
8. How to organize data and information
9. Assist in understanding opportunities for cooperation
10. Allows public access to data and information
11. A distributed website with links to resource data and information at other sites
12. Standardize watershed size
13. Data standards and specifications for GIS layers (consistent architecture and data)
14. Many agencies' data
15. Sharing resource data
16. Build on common platforms

PURPOSE OF THE UMRB FOCUS AREA TEAM

Action: Work better together
 Output: Better use of resources, i.e. pooling resources and talent
 Outcome: Sustain and enhance a viable, healthy ecosystem

FLIPCHART NOTES: ISSUES

1. Size of Basin
2. Leveraging resources
3. On the ground decisions are local
4. Build on existing processes
5. Monitor and measure performance
6. Relationships between federal, states, local stakeholders and landowners are important
7. Issue based sediment, water quality activities
8. Balanced ecosystem
9. Do the right thing
10. Maintenance or improvement
11. Measure current conditions
12. Partnerships
13. Tools
14. Share best practices
15. Model watershed in 3 to 5 watersheds in UMRB
16. Watershed alliances
17. Target resources and funding on model watersheds
18. Long term
19. No one stop shopping
20. How budgets are targeted
21. Institutional roadblocks
22. Identify funding sources
23. How nimble, flexible and strategic
24. Each agency has opportunities to participate
25. Sharing, i.e. newsletter
26. Purpose of UMRB Focus Area Team
27. Work together for better timing, resource use, communication, involving locals and best support of existing efforts
28. In partnership

Detroit River/St. Clair River

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Collaborative Success - Highlights

- Black Lagoon - Trenton Channel
 - Contaminated sediment remediation
 - Habitat restoration
 - Alternative treatment technology to reuse contaminated sediments
 - Partners: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Friends of the Detroit River and American Heritage Rivers
- Detroit River Habitat Inventory and Restoration Project
 - Filling information gaps of historic habitat data
 - Provide guidance on place-based habitat restoration
 - Provide information for spill strategies
 - Partners: U.S. Geological Survey - Great Lakes Biological Center and Ames Research Labs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, East Michigan University, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Canadian Government
- Mud Island
 - Island transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a National Steel Corporation settlement
 - Will be included in Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge
 - Will allow habitat restoration
 - Will allow public access
 - Partners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Heritage Rivers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, City of Ecorse and National Steel Corporation
- State of the Lake Conference - Lake St. Clair
 - Scientists will share current information and research
 - Identify data gaps
 - Understand roles and responsibilities of stakeholders
 - Identify opportunities for future collaboration
- Partners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Heritage Rivers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, Walpole Island First Nation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Commission, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Local Governments, the Canadian Government, and others

Proposed Innovative Collaborative Project

- Belle Isle Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) Project
 - Improved, more efficient, alternative transportation
 - Habitat restoration
 - Shoreline erosion
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Alternative storm water management
 - Native landscape restoration
 - Partners: U.S. Department of Transportation (Lead), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Heritage Rivers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, City of Detroit, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and Friends of Belle Isle

Outreach and Communication

- Internal
 - Need to have ongoing communication on emerging issues among federal agencies
 - Example: Humbug Marsh
U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data was used to support U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency decision
- External
 - Goal: Collective release of information
 - Need Detroit River/St. Clair River communication and outreach strategy to highlight collective accomplishments
 - Must target correct audience
 - Examples: Bulletin Board, Home Page, Listserver, Electronic News, Press Releases, Fact Sheets, Media Outlets
- Detroit River/St. Clair Focus Group
 - Volunteers to be a pilot project for the Midwest Natural Resource Group Communications Sub-Committee Communication Plan
 - Develop Strategy
 - Tactical Implementation

Resources Needed

- Need dedicated staff and funding from all agencies
- Develop ongoing forum for communications and outreach for stakeholders and partners
- Do not reinvent the wheel

**St. Clair/Detroit River Corridor
Current Federal Activities
November, 1999**

Project/Activity	Lead Agency /Contact	Other Federal Partners	Status
American Heritage River (AHR) Designation	River Navigator: Dr. John Hartig	All	Projects prioritized; some are underway (see below).
Technology Transfer: Soft Engineering of Shorelines Workshop	AHR / River Navigator John Hartig	USACOE, USDA- NRCS, USGS, USEPA	First workshop to be held November 23, 1999. Demonstration projects to follow.
Belle Isle Master Plan Implementation: Shoreline stabilization and habitat enhancement.	USACOE	AHR	USACOE commitment to shoreline stabilization is \$1 mil. Other funding sources being sought.
Belle Isle "Wetland Garden"/Alternative Stormwater Demonstration Project	USEPA	USACOE, USCG	Project was completed as a "Legacy" for the National Town Meeting for a Sustainable America
Detroit River Linked Riverfront Greenways	AHR/ Dr. John Hartig	NPS	
Detroit River Binational Remedial Action Plan (RAP)	USEPA/ Rose Ellison	USACOE, USGS, USF&WS, NOAA, USCG	Ongoing: Progress Report due April 2000

Occurrence and Distribution of Contaminants of Concern in Surficial Bed Sediments of Lake Erie-Lake St. Clair Basin	USGS/ S.J. Rheume, D.N. Meyers, D.L. Hubbell		Report to be final by end of 1999.
Detroit River Candidate Site for Habitat Protection and Remediation	USGS/ Dr. Bruce Manny	USEPA, USF&WS	Ongoing
Urban Dynamics Research Program	USGS; NASA Ames Research Center/ Lora Richards	USGS Great Lakes Science Center, USEPA, AHR	Ongoing
Humbug Marsh Redevelopment Permit Review	USACOE	USEPA, USGS, USF&WS	Permit denied, Summer 1999. Acquisition to Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge?
Hennepin Marsh: Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Study	USACOE/Jeff Weiser	USEPA, USGS, USF&WS	USACOE to begin study of shoals in 2000. Area may be acquired for inclusion in Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge.
Mud Island: Acquisition of island and surrounding shoals into the Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge	USF&WS/ Doug Spencer, Dave Best	USGS	
Grassy Island (assessment of conditions)	USF&WS/Doug Spencer	USEPA, USGS	USGS Assessment Report Completed: USEPA Review to follow
Stony Island Enhancement Project	AHR/Dr. John Hartig		
Lower River Ecosystem Workshop	AHR/ Dr. John Hartig	USGS, USEPA, USF&WS	Completed October 21, 1999

Detroit River Lake Sturgeon Habitat Study	USGS/Dr. Bruce Manny	USFWS, USEPA	Ongoing
Lower Detroit River Wild Celery Tubers Study	USGS/Dr. Bruce Manny		
Black Lagoon (Detroit River) Sediment Remediation and Habitat Restoration Project	USACOE	USEPA; GLNPO , USGS, AHR	Funding for sediment removal allocated from Michigan CMI. Treatability Study funded by GLNPO. Additional funds needed for treatment technology. Researching restoration of shoreline.
Michigan Source Water Assessment Program(SWAP)	USGS/Jim Nichlas	USACOE,NOAA,US EPA	Ongoing discussion/collaboration among partners inc. Canadians. Project progressing.
Collection of current Bathymetry Data on St. Clair/Detroit River Corridor (inc. Lake St. Clair)	NOAA/John Wilder	USGS, USEPA, USCG, USACOE, AHR	Desire to have work started/completed in 2000. Funding needed.
Lake and Connecting Channel Level Monitoring	NOAA	USGS, USACOE, USEPA	Recent decision to fund upgrade of guages in St. Clair/Detroit River Corridor and contiue O & M and Level Monitoring.
Bi-national Lake St. Clair Conference	USEPA/GLNPO Laura Lodisio/David Cowgill	USACOE, USF&WS, USGS, USCG	Conference Scheduled Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1999
Aquatic Macrophytes and Wetlands Research	USGS/Doug Wilcox		Completed

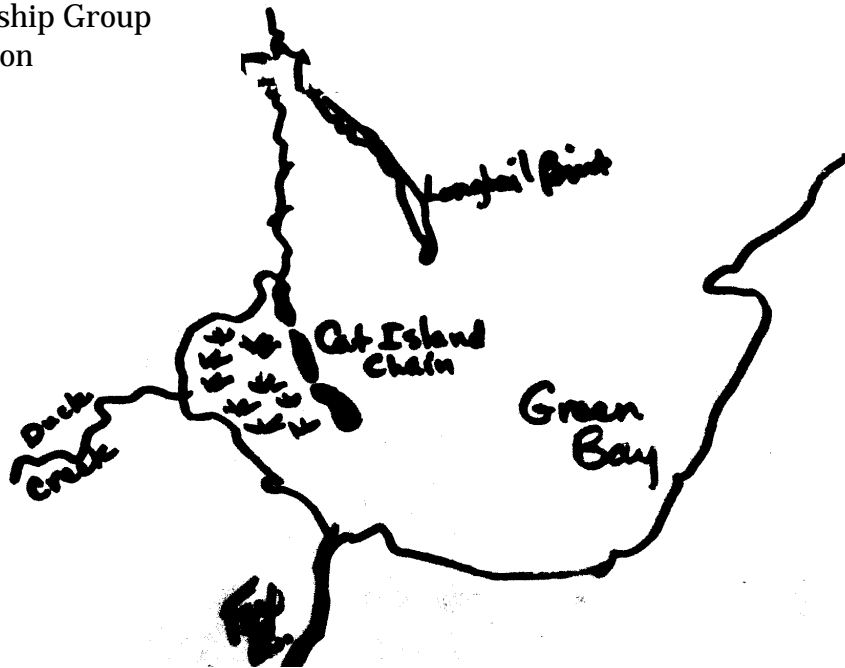
Waterways for Wildlife: St. Clair River Corridor	USGS/Dr. Bruce Manny		Ongoing
St. Clair River RAP	USEPA/Tom Matheson	USGS, USF&WS, USACOE USCG	Ongoing
Rouge River RAP	USEPA /Quintin White	USGS, USF&WS, USACOE, USGC	Ongoing
Clinton River RAP	USEPA/Laura Evans	USGS, USF&WS, USACOE, USCG	Ongoing
DEIS for I-94 from I-96 to Connor: Reconstruction Project	USDOT-FHWA/ James Kirschensteiner		
Ambassador Bridge Gateway Study to provide access between I-75 and I-96	USDOT-FHWA/ James Kirschensteiner		Design Contract to be let soon for development of design plans.
Feasibility Study for riverfront access from I-375 to the east river front area	USCOT-FHWA/ James Kirschensteiner		

Fox River/Green Bay

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Accomplishments

- Contaminated Sediment Cleanup
 - Intergovernmental actions
 - Superfund
 - Natural Resource Damage Assessment
- Watershed/Ecosystem Management and Restoration
 - Remedial Action Plan implementation
 - Lower Fox River Partnership Group
 - Cat Island Chain restoration



Action Items

- Complete sediment cleanup and natural resource restoration plans for Lower Fox River/Green Bay
- Continue outreach efforts that provide the most accurate, up-to-date, information in order to communicate the commitment of federal agencies in the focus area
- Coordinate on final feasibility study and detailed design of Cat Island chain project with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Brown County
- Investigate potential complimentary greenway and trail projects in the focus area
- Promote Natural Resources Conservation Service Buffer Initiative in the focus area
- Continue emphasis on wetland and habitat restoration projects in the focus area

Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Need to increase active participation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Fox River/Green Bay focus area
- Various U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff members are active in several projects, but not in the Midwest Natural Resources Group coordination effort

Great Lakes

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Status Report of Activities

- Draft Great Lakes Ecosystem Report
- Great Lakes Planning Session, including identifying agency priorities for Great Lakes
- New Great Lakes Strategy
- Forest Service Great Lakes Assessment
- Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP) Acceleration
- Binational/Regional Emergency Response Teams
- Ballast Water Management
- Binational Toxics Strategy
- Low Water Level Congressional Briefing
- State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC) Indicators

Other General Areas of Joint Success

- Dredging and Sediment Remediation
- Toxics Reduction
- Invasive Species
- Wetlands
- Habitat Restoration
- Delisting Threatened/Endangered Species
- Non-point Source Pollution and Erosion Control

Future Projects

- SOLEC Indicators
- Use Midwest Natural Resources Group Communications Plan to promote few key indicators, e.g. Lake Trout, Bald Eagle, and Beach Closings
- Agency Review of Ecosystem Report
- Use Midwest Natural Resources Group Communications Plan to promote success stories
- We Support Communication Team Coordinator Position

Potential Future Joint Projects

- Coastal Wetlands Monitoring Project
- Integrate Spatial and Modeling Capabilities
 - Such as collaboration on NASA regional earth science application center (remote sensing and modeling)
- Great Lakes Information Network

Action Items for Senior Leaders

- Lead new major inter-agency Great Lakes Budget Initiative
- Support for Great Lakes Indicators through SOLEC
 - Ensure transfer to end user, including common GIS database
- Support Agency Review of Ecosystem Report
- Support Great Lakes Week in Washington, D.C., March 2000



Saginaw River and Bay

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Status

- No one came to meeting
- Many attendees represented several focus areas
- Gathered people for Detroit River Focus Area meeting
- Although low attendance at this meeting, there is a strong local agency interest

Accomplishments

- Held focus area meeting in November 1999 at Lansing, Michigan
- Have garnered strong local interest

Action Items

- Coordinate next focus area meeting for late January, following Detroit River meeting

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- Great Lakes Visitor and Education Center
 - Place for all agencies to showcase missions and accomplishments
 - Located on Interstate 75, near Bridgeport, Michigan
 - High public visibility
 - Federal land acquisition
 - Private fund raising for construction
 - Excellent inter-agency collaborative potential
 - Partners include federal, state, local government and nongovernmental organizations
- Natural Resources Damage Assessment in Saginaw River
 - PCB contaminated sediment cleanup
 - Monitoring and habitat restoration
 - Land acquisition
 - Partners include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (lead), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service (complimentary to Greenway Initiative and Rails to Trails), Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and various tribes
- Comprehensive Ecosystem Study of Saginaw Bay
 - Track fish, habitat recovery and determine the impacts of exotic species
 - Aquatic wetland restoration
 - Partners include: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and various Universities

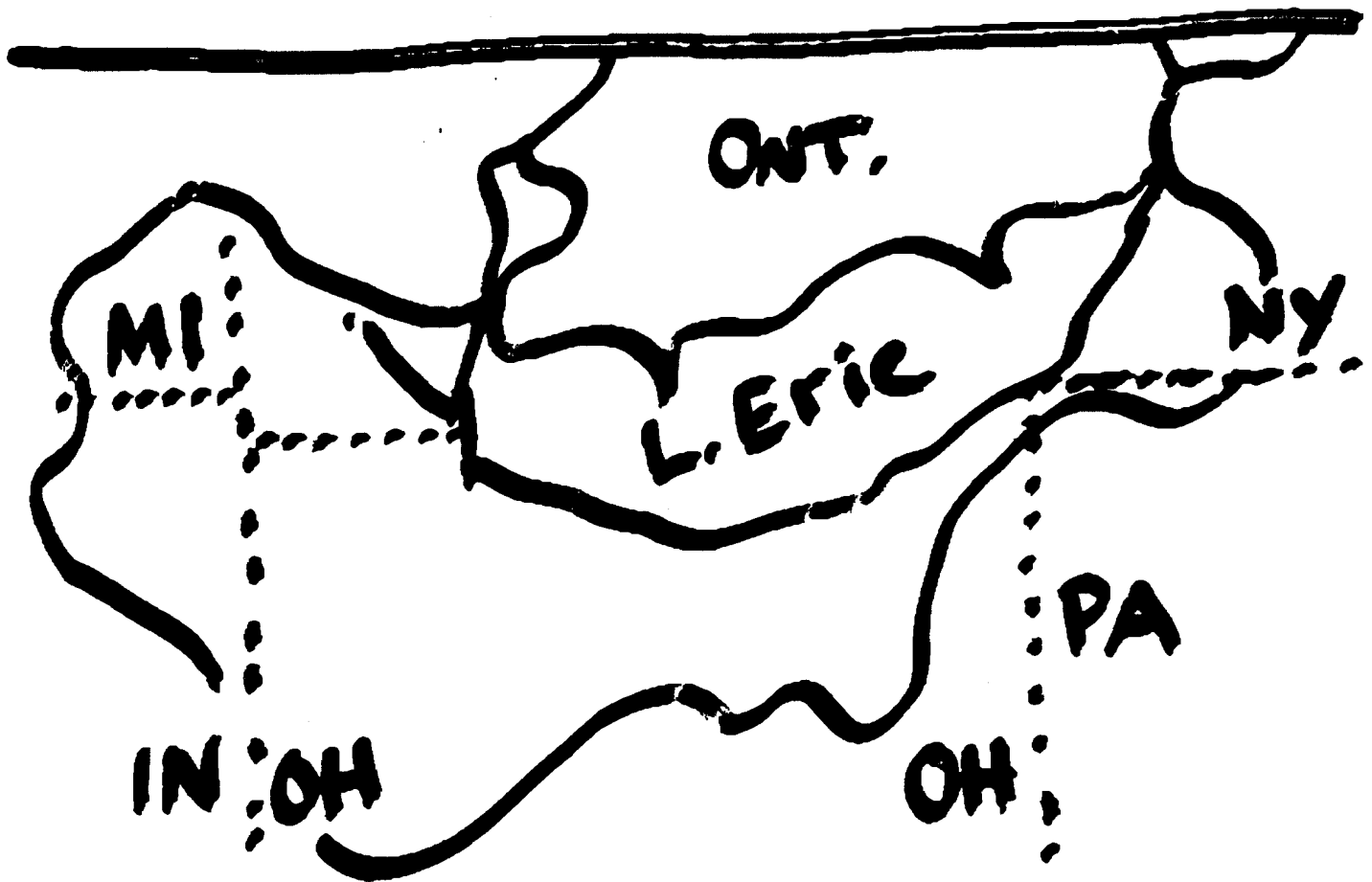
Recommendations to Senior Leaders

- Supervisors need to specifically allocate resources and field personnel to attend meetings
- Reconfirm that the Midwest Natural Resources Group is a priority for all involved agencies
- Develop a means of communication and outreach, both within the Group and among the public

Southern Lake Erie

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Lake Erie Focus Area



MAP

Accomplishments

- National Park Service
 - Cuyahoga River Navigator selected
 - \$120 million to fix CSO
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Toledo Harbor Sediment Reduction Project
 - Partners include U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Farm Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey and Ohio State University Extension Services
 - Lake Erie Buffer Program
 - Partners include Farm Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey and Sea Grant
 - Develop draft strategic plan and buffer brochure
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 - Ten year program including counties in western and central Lake Erie basin
 - \$4 million state funding and \$32 million federal funding
 - Partners include U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Farm Services Agency, U.S. Geological Survey and Sea Grant
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Lake Erie wetland acquisition program (30 acres)
 - Cooley canal jetty project completed
 - Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
 - Over 35 wetland sites restored on private lands
 - Over 400 acres of wetland restoration on private lands
 - Metzger's Marsh restoration and coordination
- National Water-Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA)
 - Three reports in draft form
 - Two with LaMP
 - One with Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Characterization of Data to Compute Loads to Lake Erie
 - Contaminants in Aquatic Bed Sediments of Lake Erie
 - Status and Trends in Suspended Sediments and Conservation Tillage
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP)
 - Lake Erie status report and update
 - U.S. Geological Survey report
 - Seven beneficial use impairment assessments completed

Plans

- National Park Service
 - River Navigator to form organization
 - Set priorities and goals
 - (U.S. Geological Survey Project - \$200,000)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Continue focusing on:
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 - Lake Erie Buffer Team
 - Toledo Harbor Sediment Reduction Project
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Continue wetland acquisition program by adding 400 - 600 additional acres
 - Join Natural Resources Conservation Service Buffer Team (protection of streams)
 - Continue to work with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP) priority habitat sites
- U.S. Geological Survey - National Water-Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA)
 - Finalize draft reports
 - Begin two new reports:
 - Lake Erie Contamination Hotspots
 - Status and Trends in Nitrogen and Phosphorus Loadings
 - Start Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) program in Cuyahoga NRA
 - Coordinate with River Navigator on Cuyahoga CWAP Project
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Lake Erie Management Plan (LaMP)
 - Habitat Action Plan (Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - PCB and mercury action plans
 - Complete five additional beneficial use assessments
 - Focus on state and provincial ecosystem objectives
 - Complete Lake Erie Contaminated Sediment Hotspots Report

Focus Area Goals

- Improve communications
 - Email
 - conference calls
 - quarterly
- Web page postings
 - Post quarterly
 - Midwest Natural Resource Group personnel
 - Focus area summary

Southern Lake Michigan

Focus Area Meeting Notes

Vision Statement

A sustainable Lake Michigan ecosystem that ensures environmental integrity that supports, and is supported by, economically-viable, healthy human communities.

Goal statement

To restore and protect the integrity of the Lake Michigan ecosystem through collaborative, place-based partnerships

End Point Subgoals

- We can all eat the fish
- We can all drink the water
- We can all swim in the water
- All habitats are healthy, naturally diverse and sufficient to sustain viable biological communities
- Public access to open space, shoreline and natural areas is abundant and provides enhanced opportunities for human interaction with the Lake Michigan ecosystem
- Land use, recreation and economic activities support a healthy ecosystem

Means (to the end point) Subgoals

- Sediments, air, land and water are not sources or pathways of contamination that affect the integrity of the ecosystem
- Exotic species are controlled and managed
- Ecosystem stewardship activities are common and undertaken by public and private organizations in communities throughout the basin
- Collaborative ecosystem management is the basis for decision-making in the basin
- We have enough information/data/understanding to inform the decision-making process

Accomplishments

- Developed clear geographic definition of focus area
- Agreed to focus on three specific areas
- Development and sharing of monitoring information
- Worked to avoid duplication of effort
- Enhance resources and sharing of data

Action Items

- Develop good GIS habitat data
- Coordination with Lake Michigan Monitoring Council
- Support Chicago Wilderness Project
- Utilize and support habitat atlas information
- Continue Focus Area communications through established email
- Solicit sponsorship and develop a Lake Michigan Use Meeting to focus on:
 - Public health issues related to natural resources
 - Mining and erosion of dunes

Targeted Focus Area Activity

- For 1998-1999:
 - Form the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordinating Council. We did, have had two meetings and have a web site at: wi.water.usgs.gov/lmmcc/index.html
 - Develop a Lake Michigan On-line Atlas that features habitat and uses GIS. We did and the first part is on line at: www.epa.gov/lakemich
 - Hold a stakeholders meeting. We held the "State of Lake Michigan '99" conference on November 8-9 in Muskegon, Mich., with an attendance of over 200
- For 1999-2000:
 - Continue to develop the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordinating Council and make it operational with the development of a Lake Michigan Monitoring Plan
 - Continue to develop the Lake Michigan On-line atlas, with the addition of the Chicago Wilderness models and tools
 - Hold a Beach Conference to address E. Coli and erosion issues